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The COMPASS

AMERICAN · ASSOCIATION · OF · SOCIAL · WORKERS

130 E · 22d · St · New York City

SEPTEMBER, 1933 VOLUME XV, NUMBER 1

New Membership Record

Membership applications for the current year have surpassed the most optimistic expectations. Between January 1, 1933, and September 1, 1933, the total number of applications received was 2,559 or four times as many as were usually received in a full calendar year in the past. In 1932 the effect of the coming change in the membership requirements was already noticeable as 975 applications were received during this year, establishing the previous high record. On September 1, 1933, the membership of the Association went to 7,394 and the chances are good that it will exceed 7,500 after the applications still pending have been acted on.

The national office and the Applications Committee are endeavoring to handle the pending applications as rapidly as possible, but even so several more months will be required before all of them can receive final action. Chapters may wish to reassure applicants who are concerned about the delay that all applications received under the old requirements will be considered under the old requirements even though the new requirements are now in effect and that the delay is caused by the unprecedented volume of work and the interruption to necessary correspondence during the summer months as a result of vacations.

Certification Adopted in California

A system of certification of social workers is now an accomplished fact in California. The Department of Registration and Certification set up within the State Conference of Social Work to develop a plan for certification adopted a set of By-Laws and elected a Board of Examiners at the meeting of the State Conference in May. The Board of Examiners consists of five persons who must be "persons of recognized standing in the field of social work in California." Three of the examiners must have the following qualifications:

1. Be at least 27 years of age.
2. Have a degree from an approved college or university.
3. Have had one year's work in an approved school of social work.
4. Have had four years of practical experience in social work in the State of California.

The following persons have been elected to constitute the Board of Examiners:

Martha A. Chickering, University of California, Berkeley.

Mary Stanton, Council of Social Agencies, Los Angeles.

Hyman Kaplan, Executive Director, Federation of Jewish Charities, San Francisco.

Helen A. Montegriffo, Field Agent, Emergency Relief Administration, Sacramento.

Aleta Brownlee, Executive Secretary, County Welfare Department, Santa Barbara.

The Board of Examiners has "complete and final responsibility for the setting up of standards, for the registration of social workers, for the giving of examinations and for certifying applicants who wish to register."

The Executive Committee of the Conference is to serve as the Executive Committee of the Department of Registration and Certification and the Board of Examiners is administratively responsible to the Executive Committee. The Secretary of the Conference is to serve as Secretary of the Department of Registration and Certification.

The initial registration fee will be $2.00, with an annual charge of $1.00 for renewal. Examinations will be held at least twice a year "at points accessible to applicants for examination."

During the first year of operation (until May 1, 1934) examinations will not be given and "any case worker or executive or sub-executive employed on a salary by a social agency of recognized standing, who has lived in California for a period of three years, has graduated from a high school or who has the equivalent education thereof, and who has had at least two years of experience on salary in such a recognized social agency in California, shall be certified by the Board of Examiners as a registered social worker."

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A supplementary amendment to this provides that "those who are at present members of the American Association of Social Workers shall be considered by the Board of Examiners as registered social workers."

The Code Question

There has been continued discussion during the summer of the relationship of social work to the NRA, and the possibility of a code or codes for the professional, as well as the non-professional, staff in social work is being explored. Although the government has indicated that permanent codes are not expected from non-profit organizations, the possibilities of voluntary action in the social work field are being considered.

The National Social Work Council was invited in August to consider this problem jointly with the A. A. S. W. The Council has taken preliminary steps and it is likely that the appointment of a committee will be announced shortly, although the auspices of such a committee are not certain at this time. The National Social Work Council is made up of representatives of national social work agencies which in turn are representatives of local agencies.

In the meantime many of the chapters of the Association have expressed interest in the possibility of a code involving some of the professional classifications. As fast as the national office can secure material on this subject, it will be passed on to all the chapters.

Interpreting Competent Social Work

As a first step in carrying out the project of interpreting competent social work to the public, which was announced in the July COMPASS, plans have been made for a committee appointed jointly by the Social Work Publicity Council and the A. A. S. W. The Social Work Publicity Council has already appointed as its representatives on the committee Natalie W. Linderholm, chairman, Bart Andress, R. K. Atkinson and Clare M. Tousley. Representatives will be appointed very shortly by the A. A. S. W.

The first step suggested is that a meeting be arranged on the initiative of a chapter of the A. A. S. W. or a local Social Work Publicity Council. At such a meeting talking points to be made clear in explaining to the layman what is competent social work could be presented by one or more professional social workers. Publicity Council members might offer valuable suggestions as to which talking points are likely to appeal to the public and which ones are too technical or too vague or perhaps too far in advance of present public opinion to bring conviction. If no Social Work Publicity Council representative is available, a board member or layman interested in having social work better understood by the community might profitably be enlisted. There are publicity councils in the following cities: Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Denver, Des Moines, Detroit, Honolulu (Hawaii), Kansas City (Mo.), Minneapolis, New York, Omaha, Philadelphia, Richmond, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis and Toronto (Canada).

Out of a number of such discussions in many parts of the country, it is hoped that we can bring together material for use at a joint session at the National Conference of Social Work in Kansas City, May, 1934.

Certainly this question is going to bob up in every community this year and it may overshadow almost all others for the time being. The way that it is answered in each city will deeply affect social work throughout the country. With taxes for unemployment relief rising, the taxpayer will say to the private social agency, "Why should we make contributions for the salaries of professional social workers—why indeed should they be retained when so much relief work is being supplied by public funds?" To the public agency, the taxpayer will put the question a little differently, "Why indeed should you employ competent workers when more cheaply you may be staffed with out-of-work firemen, teachers, clerks or politicians who may otherwise have to receive public relief? What is there about this business that any person with common sense can't do?"

Members of the Association of Social Workers are not particularly concerned whether in our communities able social workers are employed under private or public auspices. We are concerned, however, that one way or another their services should remain available to those who need them. Social workers have not done a particularly good job in interpreting their professions to a wide circle of the lay public. Emphasis has been put on relief—service is but vaguely understood.

One thing good taste as well as effectiveness dictates and that is that we cannot speak well of ourselves to the lay public. If this is done it must be said by others than social workers—by people in each community who have an honest conviction about the contribution we make. There is something that we ourselves can and must do, however, and that is to try to explain in simple human terms the skills a social worker requires what he believes and how he goes about his j It will then be up to the lay reader or listener decide whether the professional worker car something others are not equipped to do a therefore that he is a good investment for eve community . . . a necessary adjunct to socializ civilized living.

In localities where the social work interpre

For Employed Social Workers

Evening courses for practising social workers are offered by Fordham University School of Sociology and Social Science. The courses begin on September 25 and meet once a week from 7 to 9 p. m. for a term of fifteen weeks.

The courses offered during the first term are as follows:

MONDAY
- Introduction to Social Case Work — Rev. Thos. L. Brennock
- Psychiatry I — Dr. Michael P. Lonergan
- Crime and Punishment — Mr. Wm. J. Harper

TUESDAY
- Principles of Public Health Nursing I — Miss Ann Doyle
- Social Psychology — Rev. John P. McCaffrey
- Economic Basis of Public Welfare — Mr. Spencer Miller, Jr.

WEDNESDAY
- Social Worker and the Law — Mr. Stephen S. Jackson
- Mental Hygiene I — Dr. Frank J. O'Brien
- Principles of Probation — Mr. James S. Owens

THURSDAY
- Sociology — Rev. Paul J. Faustmann
- Child Guidance I — Dr. Michael P. Lonergan
- Objectives in Child Welfare — Miss Harriet Townsend

FRIDAY
- Public Health and Preventive Medicine — Dr. Chas. F. Bolduan
- Naturalization and Immigration — Dr. Irene Slachta
- History of Social Work — Rev. Edw. S. Pouthier, S.J.

Further information may be secured from Fordham University, 803 Woolworth Building, New York City.

Certification—Why Have It?

CERTIFICATION of social workers has been the subject under consideration during the past year by a discussion group of the New York City Chapter. The group, of which Richard Cadbury has been chairman, in presenting its findings to the Chapter, emphasized the importance of legal recognition for social work and for social workers, and outlined the basic provisions of a certification bill.

Following is the report made to the Chapter:

Certification as herein considered would set up a minimum professional standard for possible use in the selection of workers by social agencies, both public and private, and would be a legal recognition of professional status.

Since the American Association of Social Workers, whose national membership on September 1, 1933 totalled 7,394, of whom approximately 1,300 were in New York State, is the one group whose activities have consistently centered around the raising of standards and status, it behooves us to be actively concerned with certification.

The Federal Census, for the first time in 1930, gave to social workers a "professional" status. I listed 31,241 persons, of whom 5,748 were in New York State, as "social and welfare workers" and classified them into 76 categories, ranging from the highly trained to the comparatively untrained. This listing did not include about 5,000 probation officers, in addition to other public officials. This unavoidable lack of uniformity and the relatively small numbers in the A. A. S. W. indicate the need for continued emphasis upon raising standards and status.

The tremendous expansion in the public welfare field in the last three years has been marked especially by the investment of grave responsibility in untrained emergency workers. The resulting wholesale unskilled treatment of individuals in distress and the ruthless lowering of standards are threatening to the well-being of the community and to the social worker's professional standing.

Emergency workers are recruited from untrained people who are themselves clients of the agency by which they are employed, and often secure their positions through political pressure. These emergency workers are allowed to deal with muddled situations in other human lives.

The trained worker is threatened by this selection of an emergency staff for service which was, just a few years ago, the province of his professional interest. He is threatened by a curtailment of the non-relief aspects of social work and by a lower salary scale. He is threatened by the burdening of the volunteer with duties for which the volunteer has no training. The trained worker tends to lose his professional identity.

The situation is further complicated by the likelihood that many of the unqualified workers

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may remain in the field and also by the anticipated increase in the need for staff in public welfare departments.

In order to protect the community and the professional social worker from further threats; in order to prevent the appointment of and seeking of appointments by unprepared persons; in order to offer to those emergency workers who remain in social work some impetus to achieve professional status, the setting up of legally recognized standards is necessary.

The Discussion Group proposes that the New York City Chapter of the A. A. S. W., through its Committee on Standards in Civil Service sponsor a bill for the certification of social workers in New York State. "Certification" is used to mean legal approval of certain standards without prohibiting uncertified persons from practicing. "Registration" commonly implies a mere enrollment of names in classified lists, and does not carry with it sufficient implication of professional status. "Licensing" signifies legal authority to practice and would imply the forbidding of practice to non-licensed persons, obviously impractical at this time.

A study of certification, registration and licensing of medicine, law, nursing and other recognized professions discloses that generally the University of the State of New York, with Boards of Examiners from those professions, exercises supervision through the Education Law, the rules of the Board of Regents and the regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

The following are the recommendations with reference to the proposed bill:

1. The Machinery for Certification

It is recommended that all matters pertaining to certification be placed in the hands of the State Department of Social Welfare. The growth of public social work and the existence of state departments in 42 states, place these official bodies in strategic positions. Furthermore, with a Board of Examiners which should consist of members of the A. A. S. W. there will be assurance of competent control. A precedent for this is the admission to the practice of law which is entirely under the jurisdiction of the Court of Appeals.

2. The Definition of Social Work

It is recommended that there be used the definition of social work set by the International Conference on Social Work, namely:

"The term social work includes every effort to relieve distress due to poverty, to restore individuals and families to normal conditions of living, to prevent social evils and to improve the social and living conditions of the community, through social case work, through group activities, through community action in legislation and administration, and through social research." This serves well as a brief explanatory description of the field but leaves undefined the border lines. To establish these lines for any particular purpose, some arbitrary decisions are necessary.

3. Eligibility

The examining board shall pass on the eligibility of all applicants.

4. Standards for Certification

It is recommended that the Association consider the standards it will sponsor. The group was divided as to the advisability of using the July 1, 1933 or the earlier membership standards of the Association. There was no agreement as to which would meet the needs of this present situation and as to how best to plan for the future.

5. One Classification

It is recommended that there be one classification. Arbitrary distinctions between junior certified social workers and senior certified social workers would tend to be confusing.

6. Time Clause

It is recommended that the certificate be granted for the life of the applicant and that the power of revoking for non-professional conduct be placed in the hands of the Examining Board.

7. Fees

It is recommended that a nominal fee of $1.00 be charged.

8. Age-Residence-County and Character Requirements

It is recommended that age, residence, and county and character registration requirements be omitted. A worker under 21 years of age and well qualified, would be an asset to social work. Residence has no bearing on professional qualifications. County registration fills no apparent need. The phrase "good moral character" is ambiguous and may be used as a political weapon.

9. A Reciprocal Clause

It is recommended that a reciprocal clause be included granting certification to those certified by other states with equivalent standards.

10. Saving Clause

It is recommended that there should be a saving clause not forbidding social work practice to those not certified.

11. Penalty Clause

It is recommended that there be a penalty clause providing a fine for violation, such as illegally posing as a certified social worker.

tion has not measurably kept pace with practice, the profession is undoubtedly going to suffer severe reverses and clients who need skilled help will be deprived of it through our own inarticulateness.

—CLARE M. TOUSLEY.

*Social Workers in the Census**

NEW light has been thrown by Ralph Hurlin on the enumeration of social workers in the 1930 occupation census. After a careful study of the social work category in the census and of other classifications most likely to contain social workers, Mr. Hurlin believes that the total number of social workers in 1930 was between 40,000 and 42,500. He reaches this estimate by adding to the 31,241 in the "Social and Welfare Workers" classification the 4,270 probation and truant officers and makes an allowance for a certain number of social workers in the following occupational groups: "Keepers of Charitable and Penal Institutions," "Religious Workers," "County Agents," "Farm Demonstrators," etc. He also points out that this estimate does not include any public health nurses, 15,865 of whom were reported to be employed full time in public health nursing in 1931 by the National Organization for Public Health Nursing.

In considering the quality of the census figures, Mr. Hurlin gives credit to the AASW for two measures which he feels were of great value in improving the quality of the enumeration. One was the detailed list of types of social work organizations and positions which the AASW prepared with the assistance of a special committee, and the other was the campaign which the AASW undertook to inform social workers of the importance of getting accurate returns for the social work group and to supply them with printed forms for making the return. These two measures, combined with the fact that in editing the occupation returns the Census Bureau had the services of a research worker with experience in the social work field, lead Mr. Hurlin to believe that the enumeration of social workers was at least as accurate as that of most occupations.

Since this was the first enumeration of social workers as a professional group in the federal census, it provided an opportunity to compare the size and distribution of the group with other professional groups. This Mr. Hurlin has done with some interesting results.

The following table shows the numerical position of social workers as compared with other professional groups:

Table 1—SIZE OF VARIOUS PROFESSIONAL OR NEAR-PROFESSIONAL GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1930

(Census of Occupations figures)

Group	*Total Number*	*Per 1000 Population*
School teachers	1,044,016	8.54
Trained nurses	294,189	2.40
Technical engineers	226,249	1.84
Musicians	165,128	1.35
Lawyers and judges	160,605	1.31
Physicians	153,803	1.25
Clergymen	148,848	1.21
Dentists	71,055	.58
College teachers	61,905	.50
Artists	57,265	.47
Journalists	51,844	.42
Chemists and metallurgists	47,068	.38
Actors	37,993	.31
Religious workers	31,290	.26
†Social and welfare workers	31,241	.26
Librarians	29,613	.24
Architects	22,000	.18
Authors	12,449	.10

Another table shows that social workers are concentrated in large cities to a greater degree than any of the other occupational groups included in the table. The index of concentration in the last column of the following table is obtained by dividing the rate per 1000 population in the large cities by the rate for the remainder of the country.

Table 2—INDEX OF CONCENTRATION IN LARGE CITIES

	Number per 1000 Population		
Group	*Cities over 100,000 Population (A)*	*Rest of Country (B)*	*Index (A Divided by B)*
Clergymen	.98	1.29	.8
School Teachers	7.28	9.02	.8
Physicians	1.78	1.04	1.7
Librarians	.35	.20	1.8
Technical engineers	2.72	1.48	1.8
Dentists	.86	.45	1.9
Lawyers	2.03	1.01	2.0
Trained nurses	3.92	1.77	2.2
Social and welfare workers	.50	.15	3.3

When the geographical distribution of social workers among the large cities only is studied, social workers are found to occur with greatest frequency relative to population in the West North Central States. The New England States and the Mountain and Pacific States tie for second place. Among the clergymen, physicians and lawyers, the lowest rate of frequency was found to occur in the Northeastern States as all three groups occur with greater frequency in the Central, Southern and Pacific States.

*A summary of a paper by Ralph Hurlin on *The Number and Distribution of Social Workers in the United States*, given at a joint meeting of Division XI and the AASW at the National Conference in Detroit.

†The figure used here includes only the total in the restricted census category "Social and Welfare Workers."

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Books

Some Basic Statistics in Social Work. Philip Klein with the collaboration of Ruth Voris. Columbia University Press, N. Y. $3.50.

By EMMA A. WINSLOW

THIS is a book of widely varied usefulness. If you wish to clarify your thinking about the distinctive values of different types of social work statistics or to refresh your memory about pioneering studies in this field, you will find much to interest you in the opening chapter on Orientation. If you are puzzling about the present and future functions of family agencies, you will be glad to have the information on the relief aspects of their work preceding and during the early stages of the current economic crisis, contained in the discussion of the findings in the special study of the monthly statistics of the four family agencies serving Manhattan and the Bronx in New York City.

Perhaps you have been wondering if you should pay more attention to the analysis of your own statistics on intake, to the breakdown of your totals to show differences in volume and trend of services in local areas, to the elimination of seasonal differences in studying social work trends. If so, this book should prove of definite service to you. In case you have had an idea that it is a simple matter to eliminate duplication in the count of the same individual by more than one agency and relate this unduplicated count to local areas for which census figures are available, the detailed description of the methodology found necessary in the New York study should prevent your establishing a similar study without full understanding of the time and cost involved in bringing it to a successful conclusion.

Dr. Klein's conclusions from his study are briefly as follows: Statistics on total intake, under-care intake, total applications, and applications for economic assistance, are sensitive indices in family agencies with reference to changes in economic conditions. Total intake corresponded most closely with changes in the rate of employment throughout the period studied. Applications tended to show more violent increases and to fluctuate more widely as unemployment grew. Under-care intake was found less satisfactory than total intake.

Statistics on case load are the best means of measuring the total volume of service rendered. As they represent a cumulative and residual burden of service and are affected by the frequent delay in closing cases when work is pressing, their value as a sensitive index of economic change is relatively slight.

Obtaining and distributing essential social work statistics by small local areas and converting them into population ratios, Dr. Klein found to be "feasible, even if laborious." Only through this method, he constantly urges, can social work statistics be integrated with available sociological data.

To those who have known Dr. Klein in connection with his work for the Association, his teaching and research studies at the New York School of Social Work, and his earlier professional activities, there will be no surprise in the soundness of judgment, breadth of viewpoint, and technical accuracy represented in this study in which he has been so ably assisted by Miss Voris. The text is clearly and interestingly written. The charts are numerous and effective. The tables are simple and well placed for reading and reference use. Mr. Lee's foreword is a pithy and valuable addition to current thinking on the importance of social work statistics.

For many years to come this book should prove a valuable addition to the libarary of the student and practitioner of social work, the economist, the sociologist, and the statistician. It is to be hoped that it will function through many channels in stimulating the thoughtful reporting and interpretation of different types of social work statistics in close relaionship to other sociological and economic data being assembled for local areas.